



Colleagues International

Newsletter

Summer 2017

It's been a busy summer at Colleagues International! From hosting the pilot year of the Iraqi Young Leaders Exchange Program – Arabic, in July, to International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) guests from twelve countries, and welcoming social workers who will spend the Fall season with us here in Kalamazoo, it has been energizing. We had opportunities to connect so many youth to their international peers, and to have farmers, volunteers and agencies working with refugees, professionals in the pharmaceutical industry, academics, and more meet with our groups. We also hired Nayeli Sanchez, who has been a fabulous addition to our team. She is our new Program Associate, a newly created position, and she is helping us grow. As we bring the world to Kalamazoo, we are committed to making Kalamazoo a more globally engaged community, in all of its diversity, drawing strength from international exchange, while enriching the professional, cultural and personal lives of local residents and visitors from around the globe. Your participation makes this possible!

Jodi Hope Michaels, Executive Director

Tasting Success! A Recap of Taste of the World

In just two years of existence, Taste of the World is fast becoming an eagerly anticipated event. Our attendance has **grown from 225 in 2016 to more than 400 in 2017**; our participating restaurants from 17 to 23; our sponsors from 2 to 11, and our beverage partners from 3 to 4.



Thank you so much to the 23 participating restaurants: Bab El Salam, Bravo!, Carrabba's, Chau Haus Schnitzel Station, Chuancai Fang Sichuan, Comensoli's, Cumin, El Gallo Blanco, Erbelli's, Feed the World Café, Hunan Gardens, J. Gumbo's, Jambo, La Pinata, Nick's Gyros, Nonla Vietnamese Street Food, Oakwood Bistro, Principle Food & Drink, Quekas, Rasa Ria, Shawarma King, Zazios and Zooroona. **Thank you for providing door prizes:** The Radisson, the Cheese Lady and Confections with Convictions!!

Special thanks to our generous sponsors: Seelye Auto Group, Oasis Hot Tub Gardens - Kalamazoo, Mid-America Psychological Services, The Radisson Plaza Hotel at Kalamazoo Center, among others.

“Taste of the World is an event that will become a gem at introducing greater Kalamazoo to a taste of food from around the world as it grows.” – **Pete Comensoli, Comensoli's Italian Bistro and Bar**

BRINGING THE WORLD TO KALAMAZOO

Upcoming delegations to Kalamazoo:



Aug. 16-19, 2017
Pharmaceutical Agencies – Palestine
(6 guests)



Aug. 15- Nov. 15, 2017
Social Worker Placements – Germany
(4 guests)



Sept. 11- Oct. 4, 2017
Social Worker Placement – Spain
(1 guest)



Sept. 2-6, 2017
Sustainable Agriculture - Regional – South Asia
(11 guests)

If you have not had the exciting opportunity to host an international visitor, we have many opportunities for you to get involved!



Kalamazoo Welcomes the Iraqi Young Leaders Exchange Program!



Colleagues International is proud to have been chosen by World Learning as a host organization for the Iraqi Young Leaders Exchange Program- IYLEP Arabic - in Kalamazoo! We had nine teenagers, two adult mentors and two World Learning facilitators arrive on the eighth of July and stay for two full weeks! They came to Kalamazoo to explore leadership development and civic engagement, with a focus on work with refugees so that back home in Iraq they can effectively work with refugees and internally displaced persons.



While they were here, they were able to meet with many local youth, organizations and agencies including Bethany Christian Services, the Islamic Center and the Kalamazoo Refugee Resource Collaborative to learn about how our city welcomes and assists refugees in resettlement. IYLEP members were also able to utilize and expand their leadership skills through programming completely dedicated to teambuilding. On their first full day, they were able to complete many challenges together with KYDNet youth at The Nature Center. In the Global Lounge at Western Michigan University, IYLEP developed their leadership skills through games and discussions with over twenty Kalamazoo youth from various local organizations.



This delegation was able to tour Kalamazoo City Hall and meet with municipal officials to gain insight into how the city runs and how officials engage our community. The Iraqi Students Union was a huge component in working with the IYLEP youth in discussing project proposals to be implemented in the home communities of the Iraqi youth. The Iraqi Students Union also helped engage the Iraqi community in Kalamazoo by hosting a cookout for the participants of the IYLEP program to have fun and eat authentic Iraqi foods.



While they did have many productive meetings, they also had plenty of free time! They were able to spend a day at Pretty Lake, dancing on a boat and eating delicious Halal foods, hosted at the home of a local citizen diplomat. After coordinating with host families, the IYLEP program also made sure to visit Michigan's Adventure. The teens participated in potlucks, pool parties and game nights! Overall, it was such a pleasure for Kalamazoo to be a part of the IYLEP-Arabic program!

Making the IYLEP-Arabic Family Feel at Home!

Below is a picture of the IYLEP delegation arriving in Kalamazoo! The teens and mentors met their host families and were able to settle in before beginning their two-week program. The host families opened their homes and lives to these youth and made them feel at home throughout their stay. Colleagues International would like to thank the following families for their incredible contribution to making our IYLEP-Arabic youth feel at home in Kalamazoo:



Susan Larner

Judy and Ed Huth

Joe and Linda Mills

Jerry and Louise Potratz

Safina Aman and Alamgir Choudhury

Riyadh N. Arooq and Nawres H. Alwaely

Mustafa Mughazy and Lesley Yuill Mughazy



My First IVLP Delegation, by Nayeli Sanchez

I met my first international delegation on a Friday morning. It was a beautiful day and Kalamazoo was bustling. I took an Uber to meet with the group of Librarians from Kazakhstan and Jodi, the Executive Director. The visitors were here through the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), the U.S. Department of State’s premier professional exchange program, spending five days in Kalamazoo. When I arrived, they were all standing in a circle, outside the Kalamazoo Public Library. As soon as I got out of the car, Jodi introduced me and I watched one of the two translators in action. I took the time to observe and listen before trying to do or say much. I wanted to know habits, emotions, personalities and cultural traditions of the group and individuals before I made any moves to connect.

When the library opened, we all moved together in a friendly herd to a conference room where I learned right along with our delegation about how our library functions. They asked insightful questions and made fascinating comments about how their own libraries in Kazakhstan work. We proceeded to tour the Kalamazoo Public Library and I felt special, to have a “backstage pass” to a place I constantly frequented.

We moved onto the streets of Kalamazoo, taking lots of pictures and bonding over our experience in the library. We took a tour of the Kalamazoo Valley Museum and ate at Lunchtime Live in Bronson Park. Food trucks lined the road and our group dispersed in the growing crowd of hungry patrons. After some waiting, we all met up around a table and chatted until Jodi showed up with the van to take us to our next appointment: The Vine Neighborhood Association with Steve Walsh.

At this point I had learned names and was able to identify the members of the delegation, which consisted of six people, five women and one man. At our meeting with Steve, I learned some more about my own home city of Kalamazoo. I learned more about the Vine Neighborhood, where Little Lending Libraries were scattered, opening opportunities for children and adults to borrow and replace books amongst each other.

A nice walk around the block and some pictures, then we were off to Western Michigan University’s own Waldo Library. I love my university and was extremely excited to show our visitors what I could. I showed them the cursed “W” under the clock tower and took them into the library where I led them to the “You are Welcome Here” sign that was covered in friendly post it notes with positive messages from visitors and students.

We met with Julie Garrison, Dean of University Libraries, and after a sit down to discuss and ask questions, we took a tour. I learned about the shifts in spaces and got to see and test the new furniture with all of my new friends. When we left Waldo, the delegation asked to see more of Western Michigan University’s campus and I obliged happily while Jodi took the van to meet us at Miller. I showed them the back half of main campus, including buildings like Knauss, Friedman, Dunbar, Dalton, Sprau Tower, Brown, and Miller Auditorium. They were also able to see structures like the Greek steps and our beautiful Miller Fountain. It definitely felt like a great day to be a Bronco!

My feet hurt a bit, and I was tired at the end of the day, but it was such a lovely experience to spend the day with our amazing Librarians from Kazakhstan. I am so happy to have met individuals I wouldn’t have otherwise crossed paths with in my lifetime. I learned some new words and shared in moments that I will never forget, right here in my own city.

Summer Delegations!

American Libraries	Kazakhstan		6/15 – 6/20
Iraqi Young Leaders Exchange Program	Iraq		7/8 – 7/22
Independent Living with Disabilities	Russia		7/11 – 7/14
Addressing the Needs of Refugee Youth	Germany		8/6 – 8/19
Pharmaceutical Industry	Palestine		8/16 – 8/19
Social Work Placements	Germany		8/15 – 11/15





Thank you to our Summer 2017 Professional Hosts!

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| Kalamazoo Public Library | Kalamazoo Valley Museum |
| Vine Neighborhood Association | Waldo Library at WMU |
| Grand Rapids Public Library | Literacy Center of West Michigan |
| Kalamazoo Islamic Center | Bethany Christian Services |
| Orchestra Rouh | Kalamazoo Nature Center |
| Kalamazoo City Hall | Michigan Immigrant Rights Center |
| MRC Industries | CELCIS @ WMU |
| WMed Innovation Center | Global Clinical Connections |
| Global Clinical Connections | Roxanne Ferguson |
| Iraqi Students Union | Arab American National Museum |
| Western Michigan University | Open Roads |
| Educating for Freedom in Schools | Air Zoo |
| Public Media Network | Optimed |
| Disability Network of SW Michigan | Open Roads Bike |
| Goodwill Industries of Southwestern Michigan | |
| Parent to Parent of Southwest Michigan | |
| Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library and Museum | |
| Kalamazoo Refugee Resource Collaborative | |
| Kalamazoo Youth Development Network (KYDNet) | |
| Van Buren Summer Migrant Education Program | |
| Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS) | |
| Western Michigan University Autism Center of Excellence | |
| Kent District Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped | |

Colleagues International would like to extend our gratitude to every business, organization, individual and agency that has held a meeting or workshop this past summer to share information and exchange ideas with our global visitors!



Colleagues International Executive Director Jodi Michaels will be teaching a Fall OLLI course entitled "Bringing the World to Kalamazoo: International Exchange through Citizen Diplomacy"

Sept. 11th, 18th & 25th | 5:30 – 7:30pm

Register Here: wmich.edu/olli/courses

Get Involved!

- Citizen Diplomacy in Action!
- Share in Professional Exchange of Practices!
- Host a Global Visitor for Dinner!
- Volunteer or Intern With Us!



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